



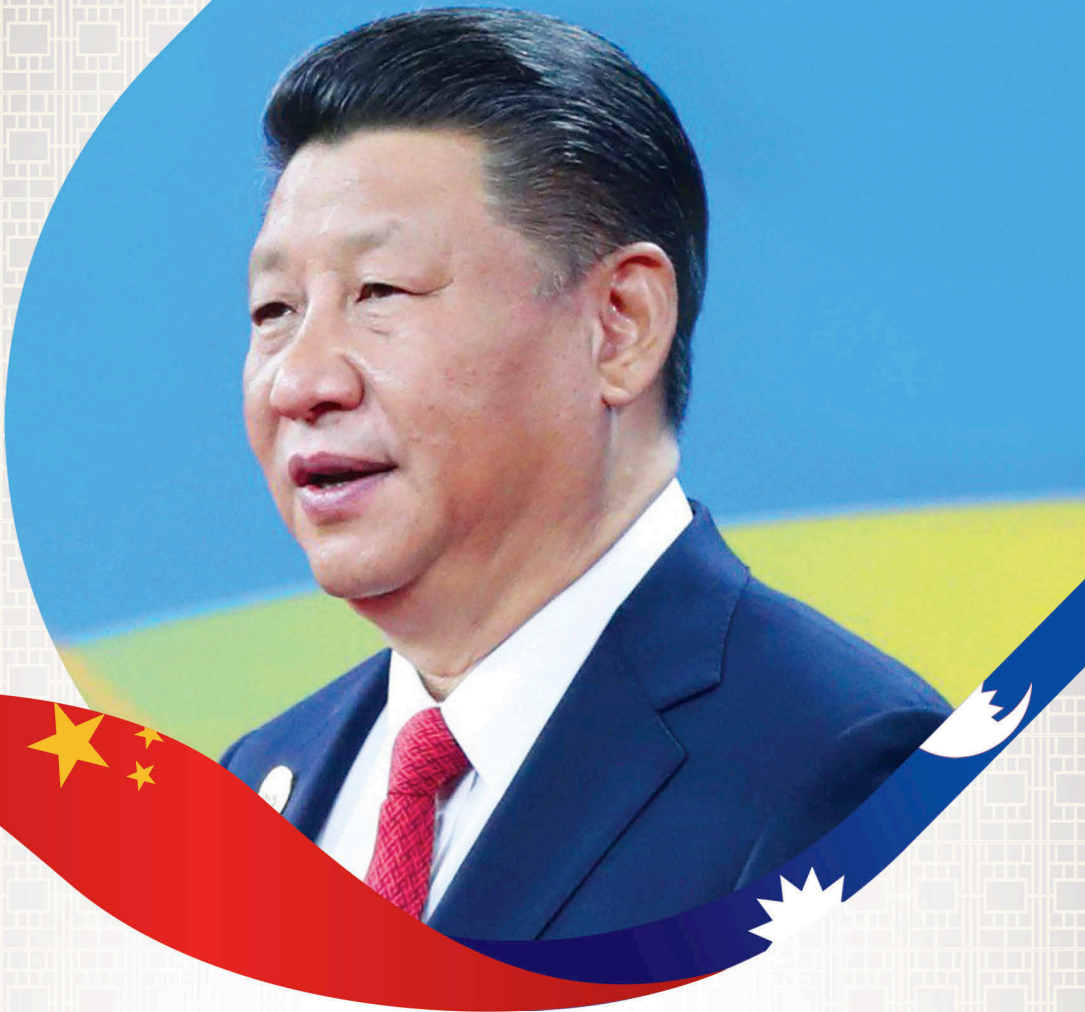
# THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Nepal's largest selling English daily  
Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj

Vol XXVII No. 233 | 16 pages | Rs.5  
Sunday, October 13, 2019 | 26-06-2076

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Janakpur Jomsom



## WARMEST WELCOME TO NEPAL 热烈欢迎来到尼泊尔

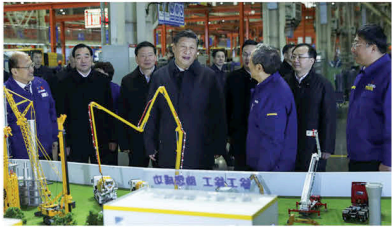


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Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is in Nepal on a two-day state visit at the official invitation of President Bidya Devi Bhandari, receives a guard of honour at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu on Saturday.

## Xi arrives, heralding the rise of an influential geopolitical actor in Nepal

The visit of the Chinese president might come with material benefits for Nepal but it is laden with geostrategic symbolism, analysts say.

**BINOD GHIMIRE**  
KATHMANDU, OCT 12

It was more than two decades ago that a Chinese president last crossed the Himalayas and landed in Kathmandu. But on Saturday, Xi Jinping did not cross the Himalayas, he flew over the Tarai plains—straight from Chennai, India, after the second informal summit with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While Xi's visit, the first by a sitting Chinese president after 23 years, no doubt holds great significance for Nepal, analysts say it is up to Nepal to make the most out of China's goodwill, which may come with strings attached.

As far as Beijing is concerned, it is clear about its foreign policy, how it wants to expand its influence in South Asia and beyond, and what measures it will take to broaden the reach and appeal of Xi's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). But in the past week, South Asia was on Xi's mind.

Just before flying to Chennai on Friday, Xi welcomed Imran Khan, the prime minister of Pakistan. In the aftermath of New Delhi's August 5 decision to strip Kashmir of its autonomous status, Beijing and Islamabad appeared to be on the same page, much to India's chagrin. The meeting between Xi and Modi too materialised after some level of uncertainty.

But in Kathmandu, despite no official communication from Beijing regarding Xi's visit until just a few days earlier, preparations to welcome the Chinese president were underway a fortnight ago. China has been Nepal's all-weather friend, but despite enjoying over six decades of diplomatic ties, high-level visits from the north have been sparse.

That's one reason why Xi's visit is a watershed moment in Nepal-China ties, say analysts.

"Xi's visit definitely takes China-Nepal relations to a new stage," said Ajaya Bhadra Khanal, a political analyst who is also a columnist for the Post. "The visit is a positive response from China."

Khanal, however, did not miss the symbolism of Xi's arrival from across the plains.

"Nepal wants China to look at Kathmandu without bringing in New Delhi, but Xi arrived straight from India. So doubts persist," he said.

This long-overdue visit from a friendly neighbour was not particularly due to China's unwillingness to engage with Nepal on a high level, say analysts. It was largely due to political instability in Nepal. The 2015 constitution and the 2017 elections have brought about a semblance of stability in Nepal, installing a strong government that is largely seen as much more open to engagement with China. Political stability certainly paved



President Bidya Devi Bhandari and Chinese President Xi Jinping during the bilateral talks at Sheetal Niwas in Kathmandu on Saturday evening.

the way for a visit, but Nepal's concerns are more material.

Constantino Xavier, a foreign policy fellow at the Brookings India, a think tank in New Delhi, said that Nepal seeks greater connectivity with China to reduce its reliance on India, whether on trade, energy security or digital connectivity.

"This also explains the strategic debate within the Nepali government, between those arguing for China's BRI and a northward focus to Tibet, across the Himalayas, and those who have made a case for diversification by linking Nepal southwards, beyond India, to the Bay of Bengal region and the Indo-Pacific," Xavier told the Post in an email interview.

Nepal has signed up for the BRI but India has cautiously refrained from taking part.

Unlike India, Nepal lacks the economic and geopolitical heft to abstain from a project as ambitious as the BRI. China is a global power and Xi one of the most powerful leaders in the world. China has engineered an economic boom in recent years, while the United States and Europe were licking their wounds after financial crises. With the West, particularly the US, wringing its hands regarding China's rise, American President Donald Trump has launched a trade war against China.

But Beijing is not naive. It knows that the US move is not just about trade, say analysts. For China, this is a good moment to shore up its backyard.

"Economy and security are the two factors that China is concerned with," said Khanal. "Taking neighbours along is a must for China, which has as an aspiration to expand its influence globally."

According to Khanal, how Nepali

politicians carry forward their foreign policy will also decide Nepal's future course. "Foreign policy must not become a tool for domestic politics," he said. "But unfortunately, the Nepal Communist Party and its leaders are trying to benefit politically from their relations with China."

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli won the 2017 elections on the back of nationalist posturing against India, which had just imposed a months-long economic blockade when Nepal was still reeling from devastating earthquakes. Oli played up ties with China as a counter-balance to Nepal's unhealthy dependence on India, even signing a transit and transport agreement with the northern neighbour. India has not been particularly pleased with these developments, especially since it has long considered Nepal to be within its sphere of influence.

But India isn't the only country watching Nepal in its pursuit of China. The US, which has long been wary of a rising China, has time and again cautioned Nepal against Chinese goodwill, sometimes bluntly. During their visits to Nepal, American officials have reminded Nepali leaders that any assistance from the north should be in Nepal's interest, not China's.

Even though they have stopped short of mentioning the Belt and Road Initiative, their references to Sri Lanka and some African countries, which have fallen into what the West calls a "debt trap", clearly demonstrate what they mean. The Chinese have been quick to counter such statements and they maintain that the Belt and Road Initiative is meant for shared benefits.

>> Continued on page 4

## On his first day in Nepal, Xi announces Rs 56 billion in economic assistance

Chinese president also announces that China will prepare detailed project report for Kathmandu-Kerung railway.

**ANIL GIRI**  
KATHMANDU, OCT 12

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Kathmandu on a two-day state visit on Saturday, in what Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali described as a "big diplomatic success" of the KP Sharma Oli administration.

"The Chinese president's visit is quite important," Gyawali told the Post. "While development cooperation and partnership are on the agenda, our key focus is deepening our friendship with China."

About an hour after landing at Tribhuvan International Airport at 4:46 pm, Xi started his official engagements, beginning with delegation-level talks with President Bidya Devi Bhandari.

"In an atmosphere of utmost cordiality and friendship, President Bhandari and President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, held bilateral talks at Office of the President," tweeted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"I am impressed with the way I was cordially welcomed and received at the airport today," the Chinese President told his Nepali counterpart during the meeting, according to a Foreign Ministry official who was present at the delegation-level talks.

"That was memorable and showed how the Nepali people love the Chinese people."

Xi further said that China always stands for Nepal's development and praised Nepal for also standing by the one-China policy.

During the meeting with Bhandari, Xi announced that China will provide Rs 56 billion in aid for Nepal over the next two years, according to a Nepali official who was present at the meeting.

"This Chinese aid will be provided for 2020-22 as economic assistance to Nepal," the official told the Post on condition of anonymity.

Later on Saturday evening, at a banquet hosted by Bhandari, Xi further announced that China would conduct the detailed project report for the trans-Himalayan railway that will connect Kathmandu with China. The preparation of a DPR was for the 72-kilometre rail line between Kerung and Kathmandu was high on the agenda. China will conduct the DPR within two years, said Xi. Details will be made public on Sunday.

Xi, while referring to the announcement of conducting the DPR of the rail project, said that Nepal will no longer remain landlocked, it will now be a land-linked country.

>> Continued on page 4

热烈欢迎中华人民共和国国家主席习近平访问尼泊尔  
Warmly Welcome to Nepal!



**Xi Jinping**  
President of the People's Republic of China



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Unparalleled change experienced with space of a generation



People from all walks of life gather in front of Potala Palace for a celebration making the People’s Republic of China’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Photo by Deqing Wangdui

By YUAN SHENGGAO

In the past seven decades since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Tibet autonomous region has created a history that previous millennia cannot match.

There have been many significant events since 1949, including the peaceful liberation, democratic reform, foundation of the autonomous region, reform and opening-up. The Tibetan residents, freed from serfdom seven decades ago and later becoming the master of their own fate, are beneficiaries of and witnesses to the great changes taking place in the plateau region that has been dubbed “the roof of the world”.

Kelzang Drolkar, from Lhasa, is one of the witnesses. The 56-year-old woman is the Party Secretary of a community in Lhasa. She has also been a delegate to the National People’s Congress for three consecutive sessions. “My post as an NPC delegate gives me a deeper understanding of the central authorities’ strong support to Tibet,” said Kelzang Drolkar. She added that her parents used to be serfs.

**“They never expected they could decide their own affairs 70 years ago. But now, they have a family member as a decision-maker of the nation,”**

she said. “Only those who experienced the cold winter would cherish the warmth of the sun,” Kelzang Drolkar added.

The peaceful liberation of and

democratic reform in Tibet have fundamentally changed the lives of the previous serfs. They used to account for more than 95 percent of the population in Tibet. The freedom and better education they enjoy have also helped them release their creative powers.

Tibet now has a complete modern education system that covers pre-school, fundamental, vocational and higher-learning education, as well as education for people with disabilities. Nyima Tashi is a professor and head of the modern educational technologies center at Tibet University. He led the center to make a number of breakthroughs in Tibetan-language-based computer software and systems. Their achievements include a Tibetan-language coding system and a neuro-network-based Tibetan-Mandarin translation system. Lian Xiangmin, an official and researcher at China Tibetology Research Center based in Beijing, said “the greatest change in Tibet over the past 70 years is in people’s lives”. “The freedom and equality resulted from the region’s liberation enable people to be masters of their own destiny, releasing their originality and creativity to the utmost,” Lian said. “That’s why Tibet has created many miraculous achievements while having explored a successful path for its socioeconomic growth,” the researcher added.



People dance and sing at Norbulingka during the National Day holiday in Lhasa. Photo by Deqing Wangdui





Swathes of people leaving the Kathmandu Valley reminds us of its magnetic power to attract people.

ABHI SUBEDI  
WORDS &  
ECHOES



A large albeit temporary exodus of the people of the valley during the Dashain festival in the first and second week of October 2019 is nothing but a grand repetition of what happens each year: It triggers discussions about the management of vehicles for passengers going home. Over two million people leaving the valley to go home to celebrate the Dashain festival definitely affects the daily programmes of the Hindus and non-Hindus alike because the state gives the longest holiday during this time, and a sense of festivity and carnival grips the mood of the country. Dashain gives an excuse to postpone even important happenings. Even when the country was going through a difficult period triggered by the insurgency from 1996-2006, Dashain was sometimes used for a lull in the battle, and even to facilitate efforts to broker peace agreements.

After the political change of 2006, non-Hindus and ethnic groups who have their own festivals or *chaads* questioned why they should observe Dashain, which is promoted by the proactive Hindu groups and a state dominated by them. But the debates created broader awareness about the festivals of the indigenous people of the country and their cultural significance. Various New Years celebrated in this country bring joy, colours, music and dance. That means the country comes out in a colourful celebratory mood several times round the year. Additionally, the debate triggered the question of the politics of culture and knowledge.

But what is intriguing and what remains ignored is the scale of the exodus that happens every year. I get surprised and even baffled to hear the great number of people leaving the valley annually. Media report incidents related to the bad road conditions. To see the visuals of buses carrying people going home to celebrate Dashain stuck in the hills of mud and blocked by boulders fallen with the mudslide is very disturbing. Young people pulling motorcycles out of the mud and old people and children waiting in the drizzle for some miracle to happen to the vehicles that would take them home are moving visuals. Some even die during this ordeal. But the most interesting part of the whole thing is that it happens.

Despite the bus services that charge



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exorbitantly high rates for tickets ignoring the government's familiar bravados to punish them, the bad road conditions, bad bus services and the distances that they have to cover under such precarious conditions, people finally make it. The miracle is, over two million people leave the valley to go home. Yes, this happens! What also happens is that these melees of people who scramble the bus parks suddenly clear out. It is difficult to know whether those groups of people who do not celebrate Dashain too get embroiled in this festive conundrum or not.

But to theorise this temporary exodus of people out of the Kathmandu valley we should turn to a few very important and ignored characters of the Nepal valley, or to use the more historically and culturally charged expression, the Nepal Mandala. This temporary exodus reminds us of the character of the Kathmandu valley, its location and its magnetic power to attract people, and the grand non-attachment of the people who leave the Mandala during Dashain, with the great well-formed Dashain festivals of the valley of the Newars, some of which have roots going

The monstrosities that fill the capital are therefore not made with a sense of belonging.

back to the Licchavi times. The explanation of this practice is very simple—people going out of Kathmandu at this time for Dashain are the visitors for whatever reasons or length of time that may be. They have constructed homes in the valley, but they do not feel that they have any cultural base here. They treat themselves psychologically as people from moffusil, a term that was used commonly during the British Raj in India to characterise the relation of 'Calcutta' with the provinces outside it. People's relationship with this centre of culture, learning and power was defined as the relationship between cen-

tre and periphery, between metropolis and moffusil. 'Calcutta' had the luxury of a system created by the historicity associated with the British Raj of developing a sense of alterity vis-à-vis the moffusil, a privilege Delhi and other cities did not have. Delhi does not fit into the centre and periphery binary. It is a grand functioning chaos and a power centre that has the luxury to experiment with the different phases of history.

In the case of Kathmandu, alias 'Nepal', it created the alterity with a sense of the uncanny, of the oligarchic rulers to show that moffusil was a lower sphere that stood ruled by their masochistic might. People travelled for weeks to land in their capital for various purposes. So much so that the Nepali citizens of the Madhesh area had to take a visa to enter here.

When the people from moffusil came here they either saw the Rana buildings and palaces or the traditional beautiful Newar houses and architectonic sites neither of which belonged to them. So when things changed, people from outside came here, made money and built buildings with a sense of vengeance. The monstros-

ities that fill the capital are therefore not made with a sense of belonging, but with a sense of fulfilment. That is the reason why they do not have any character or any plans. That is the reason why their governments 'give a damn' to build the city nicely and construct well-planned streets. That is the reason why millions of them return to their spaces all over the country symbolically during Dashain. Several of them drive their cars on terrible roads to show off to their poor neighbours and relatives. One of my relatives exactly said so to me; I feel deeply shattered by that.

As shown by the erstwhile Maoists' march of three to four lakh people in Kathmandu in 2010, people from outside and parties see the symbolic effectiveness of making a presence here and returning to the moffusil. I regard the temporary Dashain exodus as a significant metaphor of both the lure of the powerful centre and the love for the moffusil. Changing the practice of alterity and the psychology of the centre and periphery is the only condition for the success of federalism in Nepal.

The hooligan spirit

Even the oldest democracies, such as the US and the UK, are increasingly riven by tribal hatreds.

IAN BURUMA

The late Alan Clark, a British politician of the Margaret Thatcher era, chiefly known for his womanising and his hard-right views, once lamented to me the decline of the British fighting spirit that built empires and won wars. Half in jest, I suggested that this aggressive disposition was still there among British soccer hooligans who ransack stadiums and foreign towns. He replied with a dreamy look in his eyes that this was indeed something that 'might be usefully tapped'.

What seemed a trifle outrageous then is now painfully real. For the hooligan spirit is indeed being tapped. Right-wing terrorism is increasing in the United Kingdom—even as Islamist violence is ebbing, at least for now. British politicians who are against the UK crashing out of the European Union without a deal receive death threats, or worse. Jo Cox, a Labour MP and outspoken anti-Brexiteer, was murdered in 2016 by a man who screamed 'Britain First!' as he shot and repeatedly stabbed her.

Britain is hardly unique. In the US, extreme right-wing groups have caused havoc in such places as Charlottesville and Pittsburgh, accompanied by battle cries like 'Jews will not replace us' (the 'us' meaning white Christian folks). The autocratic Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro openly extols torture. Even in Germany, violent extremism is on the rise, especially in areas that were part of the former Communist East Germany. In



REUTERS

US President Donald Trump and Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson during the G7 summit in Biarritz, France, August 25, 2019.

India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shown indifference, at best, to acts of political violence by Hindu extremists, often directed at Muslims.

Dictators and demagogues have always tapped the consuming resentments of people who feel that life has treated them badly. Some people are naturally drawn to violence; only the right circumstances are needed for such urges to be unleashed.

Some of this is spurred by technology. Hate and aggression that used to be kept under wraps, or confined to soccer stadiums, can now be openly expressed and instantly spread to millions of like-minded people via the internet. This type of mob behaviour is not limited to the far right. Self-righteous aggression can erupt on the left as well. The same is true of anti-Semitism. There is plenty of it in the

UK Labour Party, for example.

What is particularly disturbing about the increase in political violence in countries like Britain and the US is that democratically elected leaders are actively encouraging it. President Donald Trump calls the press 'the enemy of the people'; he urged supporters to 'knock the crap' out of critics at one of his rallies; and he told four congresswomen of colour to go back to where they came from (all but one was born in the US). More recently, Trump indirectly threatened violent retaliation against the anonymous whistleblower who exposed his efforts to persuade Ukraine's leader to dig up damaging information about former Vice President Joe Biden, a leading candidate to challenge him in the 2020 election, and about Biden's son, Hunter Biden. It is no

surprise that a New Jersey police chief who said that Trump was 'the last hope for white people' apparently took such incitement to heart, allegedly slamming a black teenager's head into a doorjamb.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is a smoother, more educated operator than Trump, but he, too, refuses to stop calling opponents of his Brexit policy traitors, or collaborators with foreign powers. A bill that would allow Parliament to stop a no-deal Brexit is, in Johnson's words, a 'surrender bill'. When MP Paula Sherriff criticised the prime minister's language in Parliament, mentioning that MPs are frequently subjected to death threats and abuse from people using such words, he spat back that he had 'never heard such humbug in all [his] life'.

The danger of this kind of rhetoric is

not only that it makes violent people feel free to act on their brutal impulses. After all, if the president or prime minister says there are traitors in our midst, it is not only permissible to attack them; it is our patriotic duty. Nor is the use of abusive language just a matter of incivility—a common occurrence in democratic discourse, on all sides, despite informal rules ('my honorable friend') to disguise it.

The most serious consequence of injecting violence into politics, even if only in words, is that it does severe damage to liberal democracy. A representative democracy can function properly only if political opponents don't behave as though they were mortal enemies. Argument and compromise are how politicians must try to defend their constituents' interests. But you cannot compromise with an enemy or a traitor; any more than a religious person can compromise over something he holds sacred.

There are many reasons why even the oldest democracies, such as the US and the UK, are increasingly riven by tribal hatreds. Politics is now less about interests than about culture, identity, and furious emotions stirred up in the endless echo chambers of the internet. Not all of this is the fault of politicians. But when political leaders deliberately exploit these rifts and whip up hostile emotions even further, they do immense harm to the institutions that guarantee people's freedom and safety.

It is hard to know whether violence will abate once the likes of Trump, Johnson, Modi, and Bolsonaro are gone. It will obviously depend on who comes next. But once people feel licensed to violate all norms of civilised behaviour, because the highest political leaders have already done so, it will be difficult to reverse. The ghastly irony of our times has been that the very people who promised to make their countries great again have done the most to destroy what made them great in the first place.



# Taxing digital economy, should we wait?

Current international tax rules are no longer compatible with digital business models.

TORIQ RAHMANSYAH & DIMAS HERMAWAN NOVI ADHI

Many countries are now facing a major issue concerning digital economies: they cannot impose taxes (either direct or indirect) on digital companies selling digital and non-digital goods or services through websites or online platforms. This issue arises because current international tax rules are no longer compatible with digital business models.

For direct taxes, especially income tax, a source country cannot tax digital companies because there is no nexus or relationship between an income and the country where the income is generated. Due to international tax rules, a source country has the right to tax business profits derived by foreign residents only if there is a fixed place of business called a permanent establishment (PE) in the country.

Unfortunately, in many tax treaties the word 'fixed place' mainly refers to a physical presence in the source country. In this emerging digital world, the definition of PE should be redefined as a foreign resident company that can easily run a business and sell goods or services without having a physical presence in the source country. So, no PE, no tax. That is why many digital companies, including giant techs such as Google, Facebook and Amazon, remain nontaxable due to existing treaties.

Many tax authorities also face big challenges in imposing indirect taxes—which are not as complicated as direct taxes—from digital companies, especially



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value-added tax (VAT). Under a destination principle rule in VAT, a country can tax goods or services that are consumed in the country regardless of the origin of the sellers (either residents or nonresidents). However, the application of destination principle and VAT collection from nonresident sellers is not easy, considering the fact that they can run their business and sell goods or services without having a physical presence.

The issue now is how to create a level playing field for digital and traditional business. So, what's the solution?

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—through the Inclusive Framework—issued a policy note in January. The note highlights its view that a source country should have more taxing rights in cross-border transactions involving digital companies. There are three concepts for expanding the taxing rights of the source country, namely User Participant, Significant Economic Presence (SEP) and Marketing Intangibles. A global consensus on which concept will be agreed among the members of the Inclusive

## The question is: How to create a level playing field for digital and traditional business?

Framework is expected to be achieved by 2021.

While waiting for the consensus, the Indonesian government has taken a bold step in its endeavour to tax the digital economy by proposing a draft bill, namely Taxation Provisions and Facilities for Strengthening the Economy, to the House of Representatives a couple of weeks ago.

The government opted for the SEP concept, broadening the definition of a classic PE. By this concept, a foreign resident company will be constituted to have a PE if it generates significant income from the country, despite having no physical presence in Indonesia. However, there

will be a two-to four-year waiting period until the draft is approved by the House.

So is there something we can do to create a level playing field for traditional and digital business until the draft bill is enacted? Well, we do not have any specific regulations to tackle digital companies with regard to direct taxes or indirect taxes. While we have moved one step forward to imposing income tax by proposing a SEP concept, we still, however, do not have rules to collect VAT from foreign resident sellers or companies.

Therefore, it is good to consider what other countries do in their attempts to tax the digital economy.

In 2018, the European Union Commission proposed the 'interim tax' to tackle loopholes in taxing digital economies. This tax aims to create a level playing field and to generate more revenues across the EU amid the difficulties in taxing digital businesses. This measure can be considered as a bridging-measure or a temporary solution until the proposed SEP concept under the EU law is implemented to all member states.

This interim tax targets foreign digital

companies' income from advertising, data collection activities and online platform intermediaries such as online marketplace apps. This measure imposes a 3 percent tax rate that applies only to companies with worldwide revenues of more than 750 million euro (US\$822.907 million) and 50 million euro in annual EU revenues.

So small businesses and start-ups remain untaxed, giving them an incentive to grow. Some countries like India and Israel have also taken this kind of unilateral measure in their domestic rules.

Australia can be a good example of how to enforce VAT on nonresident suppliers selling goods or services within the country. As of July 1, 2018, those suppliers are required to register, report and remit VAT through a 'simplified registration' mechanism if their turnover exceeds A\$75,000 (US\$50,497). This measure certainly promotes a level playing field.

To identify prospective non-resident suppliers, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) profiled those suppliers by using its data resources, including from the Exchange of Information, commercial databases and collaboration with other institutions, such as customs and a financial intelligence unit called Austrac.

The ATO took persuasive communication measures to engage eligible international suppliers about these new VAT rules in the first stage. If the suppliers neglect to comply, the ATO will take necessary enforcement actions.

In the end, imposing VAT on nonresident sellers is about providing a mechanism for them to pay VAT and to effectively communicate the mechanism because the VAT rules are basically in place. Finally, it will remain a big question of whether we should leave the level playing field unfair and lose the opportunity to collect more taxes from digital businesses.

*This article was previously published in The Jakarta Post, a part of the Asia News Network.*

African and European leaders must agree on a forward looking strategy to build a prosperous common future.

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF MO IBRAHIM & ETIENNE DAVIGNON

Europe and Africa are inextricably linked by history, geography, and economic ties. Today, securing a peaceful and prosperous future on either continent requires cooperation by both—but not the donor-suppliant relationship that has defined 'cooperation' in the past. Instead, leaders on both sides must build an equitable strategic relationship that benefits Europe as much as Africa, and Africa as much as Europe.

African and European leaders must now lay the foundations for such a relationship by agreeing on a forward-looking strategy that addresses structural imbalances, harnesses the benefits of migration, and delivers tangible benefits to their citizens, especially to those who have been left behind or are particularly vulnerable to climate change. And they must commit to its long-term implementation.

The pillars of such a strategy have already been identified. Since being convened last year by Friends of Europe, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and the ONE Campaign, the EU-Africa High-Level Group—of which we the authors are all members—has been working to identify essential steps for making progress in core policy areas. Those efforts have produced a four-point action plan for creating a more dynamic, equitable, and sustainable shared future.

The first step is to ensure adequate opportunities for young people. As of the



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end of 2018, youth unemployment (ages 15 to 24) in the European Union stood at 14.8 percent. In Africa—the world's youngest continent—it is even higher: in Northern Africa, the youth unemployment rate is likely to exceed 30 percent this year, with young people 3.5 times more likely than adults to be unemployed.

Europe and Africa must work together to ensure that the next generation—that is, the 663 million people under age 14 who will inhabit the two continents in 2020—does not share the same fate. To that end, leaders should set the specific target of guarantee that at least 20 percent of them—about 130 million people—

have the skills they need to participate effectively in the labour force when they reach working age.

Reaching this target will require investment in formal education systems that teach both the foundational skills—critical thinking, problem solving, and literacy—and the specific skills, such as in climate-smart agriculture, that students will need in a fast-changing labour market. Digital tools that lower the cost of access and improve accountability are also needed, with special attention paid to closing the gender gap.

Entrepreneurship should be encouraged as well. But true cross-continental

networks will function effectively only when populations in Europe and Africa internalise the sense of connection and a shared future. That is why the second key action that we identified is to foster people-to-people exchanges, by enabling at least 20 million people to study abroad. Governments should invest in a scaled-up version of the EU's Erasmus scheme that includes Africans, as well as cross-continental cultural programmes and networks of those working in education, technology, and creative industries. To facilitate skill-sharing without risking a brain drain, European and African leaders must also build reliable migration

structures—and ensure that those who return home can thrive.

To succeed, African and European leaders must commit to another key goal: delivering hard and soft digital infrastructure—or 'e-frastructure'—that benefits at least 100 million people. One way forward would be for governments to leverage public funds to de-risk investments, thereby attracting private financing. (To achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, similar strategies are needed to spur the private sector to pursue other impact investments in Africa.)

Investments in energy and connectivity—the backbone of shared future prosperity—should begin in countries that stand ready to lead in the digital economy, facilitated by a fast-track approval process that emphasises quality and cost-effectiveness. And they should be backed by investments in skills training and market linkages, to enable entrepreneurs to take advantage of this new infrastructure to expand their businesses and create the jobs Africans need.

The fourth and final priority that we identified is a reset in the Europe-Africa relationship that establishes the geopolitical alliance as a top priority. In the context of an equitable partnership based on mutual respect and a shared future, Europe and Africa should build legal and regulatory frameworks that facilitate inter-continental trade integration, boost transparency and strengthen tax collection, and improve investment conditions. We hope the African Union and the EU appoint senior leaders to work exclusively on strengthening the EU-Africa partnership.

Africa and Europe are facing a hugely attractive co-investment opportunity. But making the most of it will require difficult policy reforms and large-scale policy coordination, with government, business, and philanthropists all playing a role. If everyone does their part, the social returns promise to be as potent as the economic ones.

— Project Syndicate



# American Dream



SHUTTERSTOCK

SUBASH PANDEY

I was cycling on one of the coldest days that I witnessed after coming to Pocatello, Idaho. The temperature showed 40°F in my mobile screen. I was pedaling as fast as I could, so I could reach the apartment quickly. The door was open, so I briskly made my way into the room. A small room with two small windows, it was pleasantly warm inside as the heating system was on. Clothes were scattered between the two twin-size beds pushed up against each corner of the room. A few books, advanced statistics for Ecology, Business studies and You can Win, and notebooks were piled up on a small desk. Lot of papers littered the floor. Adjacent to the bedroom was a bathroom, followed by an open kitchen that lead to the living room. The living room was bigger than the bedroom, but almost empty with only a few bits of luggage in the corner.

I had been invited by Hari, whom I met almost one month before for the first time, for dinner on Friday night. We planned my stay that night, before going mountain biking the following morning. Hari and I are from the same district in Nepal—that's enough to make people close 6,000 miles from home. He had come to The US two years earlier, to pursue a degree in ecology. I didn't ask what he was studying when we first met because I assumed he was studying engineering like everyone else I'd met before. So, it was a little surprise when I found out.

His room mate had gone to Texas to meet his family, so that's why I thought he called me. It was around 9pm when we started cooking dinner. He started cooking, while I sat down to peel and chop potatoes and tomatoes, as well as the other usual suspects. He took an entire chicken out of the refrigerator and started butchering it into small pieces. I asked him "Do we not get chopped chicken here?" He replied, "I am not sure, but we have been buying this whole chicken from WinCo since arriving here. This is the reason I loathe buying chicken even though

I love it."

Having gone back to the bedroom to get my phone, he told me in a loud voice from the kitchen, "Dai, lock the door". I was surprised by the way he asked. "The smell of this spices will make your clothes stinky". It was especially surprising given, back in Nepal, almost all Kathmandu students cook, study, sleep and study in small rooms without so much of a problem.

Stirring the chicken with spoon in hand, he said Americans had a tendency to pick up the smell of spices. "They find it irresistible," he said. One classmate of mine told me that she once went to a Nepali restaurant, and the smell lingered with her until she did her laundry. From that day on, I never forgot to lather myself in body spray before leaving home. Hari asked me about my major, which took him by surprise.

Nepalis coming to the US to study sociology is quite uncommon, and most people are confused by the choice. Finding out that I did my undergraduate degree in forestry science in Nepal, he told me that he had passed the entrance exam, and was even offered a scholarship. I asked him why he didn't study in Nepal even after being offered a free run worth \$8000. "I wanted to study but my family pressured me

It was easy to tell he loved summer time more than his college days.

to study abroad. Like every other family, my family wanted me to study abroad. It was a choice between Australia or Canada or America; they do not see future in Nepal. I had applied to the University of Maine to study forestry but it was too expensive, so I chose to study Ecology at Idaho State, where my Non-Resident Tuition was waived", he said.

By the time he had recounted his family-driven tale, the chicken and rice was ready. Then he started talking about his family. He had an older and younger brother, and a sister. His father works in the Middle East, but plans to live out his days in Nepal. "He worked so hard to raise and educate all the kids and provided us with good schooling. He did everything he could do to make our futures bright. Now it is our turn to look after him," he said with a broken smile. He told me he wanted to visit Nepal the winter before but couldn't. "The money I earned through on-campus job is just enough for living expenses and there is no saving. Like every other Nepali student, I go to a beach-side city during summers to work between 12 and 16 hours each day to earn enough to pay college tuition. "Last summer, I earned \$13,000 in three months. I even managed to send a small amount of money to my family,"

he shared excitedly. It was easy to tell he loved summer time more than his college days. It seemed he forgot my last question—"Why didn't he return to Nepal?"

"One Nepali senior student had been to Nepal last summer, but was deported from at the airport when returning to the US," he shared. "Why was he deported?" I asked. It was then I found out that students are not allowed to get work outside campus over their summer breaks, unlike in Canada and Australia. It would be easier to get a job at gas stations, which pay you more, but you have to use your social security number. But for those of us who work casual jobs, that work on an hourly basis, don't need to use our numbers because we get paid each day. It was unfortunate, however, that that immigration officer checked and found out that guy worked off campus job and deported.

I shared this with my family, so they don't want me to return to Nepal until I have my qualification. I sometimes tease them, saying I've booked my flights, know-

ing exactly how they would react. Their responses are always awful. He reminds me, "If you have to work off campus job, never use your SSN, dai." Though he never used his SSN for off-campus job, and there's unlikely to be any record, he's afraid immigration officers could refuse him entry upon return. "I can't even imagine it, I would have neither degree nor any money to do something back in Nepal," he tells me reflectively.

Just as we were finishing our chicken dinner, he continued opening up about his life. "I work off campus job, at Nepali restaurant, and did 10-20 hours every week so I could send money back home. Once again, I have not used my SSN."

It was then that he started telling me about his brother and his problems. "My brother is suffering from a chronic disease and my family needs help. They require large sums of money every month for his treatment. Last time I sent \$5000."

"Has not this affected your study?" I asked him. He replied "I never miss a single class, and so far I've been an 'A' student in my exams." The exams here are not like Nepal's, where you have to rote-learn everything."

The sacrifices that he has to make, like his on-campus job between 10pm and 2am each night, are totally worth the exhaustion, he told me. "It disturbs my sleep but not my study. I am used to it now."

Such sacrifices are something I might have to make while I'm studying here, and maybe I'll get used to them, but it appears that I won't be returning to Nepal anytime soon. Sleep can always be caught up on. At least not until I get that paper from university.

*Pandey is a student at Idaho State University.*

## NOTICE

The Post welcomes contributions from students and writers. Please email essays, poems, reportage and fiction to [tkpfeatures@gmail.com](mailto:tkpfeatures@gmail.com), with 'Blackboard' in the subject line.

# How Dashain has changed



SHUTTERSTOCK

SNEHA DABADI

I have lost count of the number of times I have heard the saying "with time everything changes". But until very recently, I thought that one thing that would never change was the way we celebrate Dashain.

I very clearly remember how we used to celebrate Dashain in my village. The whole village would get together and celebrate. The elders would mingle with each other, and the kids would spend hours playing *lingey ping*. People looked forward to visiting temples, wearing their new clothes and jewellery. Kites, dozens of them, would be flying any time of the day. I remember how all my cousins would gather and play cards. Not being very lucky in gambling, I would always be the first to finish my coins. And I would just cry. I don't know why but I used to be a very sore loser. It is probably because I was always taught to be a winner. After I cried, my siblings would return all my coins to me. I now feel sorry for them.

A month before Dashain, I would have already decided which clothes to buy and where to buy them from. Dashain was also when the women in the village all wore red saaris. I remember watching them walk in

groups to temples, and how they would sit and gossip. I always found their gossip amusing.

A few days before Dashain, buwa would bring home an innocent-looking goat—I don't know why but the goats that buwa brought home for Dashain all had a very pure look. And every Dashain, the goat would not let us sleep peacefully until Ashtami.

One of the best parts about Dashain was *Navami Puja*. For reasons I didn't know then, I would get invited by the villagers to be worshipped as the goddess Durga. They would put tika on my forehead, offer me food, a new set of clothes to wear and then

It's not the same anymore. I don't see a single kite drifting in the sky.

would drop me back home. I used to feel very special, even though by the end of the day I would be so tired.

But the Dashain I know has changed. It's not the same anymore. I don't see a single kite drifting in the sky. The number of *lingey pings* has dwindled because there isn't enough open space to set them up. People no longer have the time to set up these giant *pings* that were such an integral part of the festival. Buses are no longer crowded with devotees heading to temples because everybody now has their own vehicles.

And even though people do get together, it's not the same. Instead of

talking to each other and having fun, everybody is stuck with their mobile phones, checking other people's posts on Instagram.

My cousins and I can now afford to play cards with notes and not coins. I still end up losing money playing cards, but I no longer cry. The number of cousins who would get together to play cards have also dwindled. Many of them are now spread all over the world.

New clothes for Dashain do not evoke the same excitement and joy in me. I don't have to step out of my house on 'Nawami day'. Buwa no longer brings a goat home. I have been told that it's a tedious task to do so, and instead, we now buy mutton from a meat shop.

One of the most disturbing trends I have seen during Dashain is how everyone seems to be hell-bent on outdoing each other. Who's wearing the most jewellery, who's slaughtering the biggest goat, who's brought a brand new something?

Seeing this drastic change in the way we celebrate Dashain breaks my heart. But at least I still get 15 days vacation from school for the festival, even though what I do has changed.

*Dabadi recently graduated +2 from Kathmandu Model Secondary School.*



EU and UK intensify Brexit talks ahead of key summit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BRUSSELS, OCT 12

British and EU negotiators have agreed to intensify efforts to find a new Brexit withdrawal agreement, just days before a key European summit.

European Union member states will review progress on Monday, following a meeting between influential leaders French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

A European diplomat, however, told AFP that EU ambassadors may gather as soon as Sunday for a stock taking if Barnier feels there is any backsliding from the British side.

The stepped-up negotiations came after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Irish counterpart Leo Varadkar held a meeting Thursday both sides dubbed “promising”.

That led to a Brussels working breakfast Friday between EU negotiator Michel Barnier and British Brexit minister Stephen Barclay to break the talks logjam.

Neither side revealed much detail about what was discussed.

But a European official told AFP: “Basically, the British are ready to evolve on the question of customs, towards an all-island economy.”

Asked whether the British province of Northern Ireland might remain in the EU customs union after Brexit, Johnson refused to give what he called a “running commentary” on negotiations.

“I can certainly tell you that under no circumstances will we see anything that damages the ability of the whole of the United Kingdom, to take full advantage of Brexit,” he said.

The president of the European Council Donald Tusk, who hosts next week’s summit, had said he would have pulled the plug on plans to discuss Brexit if there was no hope of progress.

But, after Barnier’s meetings, the European Commission said: “The EU and the UK have agreed to intensify discussions over the coming days.

“The Commission will take stock with the European Parliament and member states again on Monday,” it added, to allow time to draw up the agenda of Thursday’s EU summit.

Modi tells Xi Mahabalipuram summit will launch ‘new era’ for India and China

The two leaders agreed to ‘remain sensitive to each other’s concerns’ so the relationship ‘will be a source of peace and stability in the world’.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MAHABALIPURAM (INDIA), OCT 12

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that his summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping would launch a “new era” between the neighbours who are seeking to overcome troublesome differences.

Modi and Xi strolled along a pristine Bay of Bengal beach and held one-on-one talks overlooking the ocean before their delegations sat down to official negotiations at the historic resort town of Mahabalipuram, south of Chennai.

The two leaders are meeting for the second time in a year in a bid to ease tensions over border disputes, the troubled Kashmir region and China’s domination of trade between their huge economies. Modi said a summit in the Chinese city of Wuhan last year “gave increased stability and fresh momentum to our relationship”.

“Our Chennai vision today has launched a new era of cooperation between our two countries,” he added as he launched the formal talks.

Modi highlighted how the two had agreed last year to “prudently manage our differences and not to allow them to become disputes.”

They agreed to “remain sensitive to each other’s concerns” so the relationship “will be a source of peace and stability in the world. All these are our big achievements and inspire us to work harder.”

Modi did not mention the irritations between the two sides, saying only that he and Xi had “discussed important bilateral and global issues.”

The buildup to the summit has been dominated by India’s move in August to end the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Changes ordered by the New Delhi government will see Kashmir’s Ladakh region—part of which is claimed by Beijing—turned into a separate Indian administrative territory.

India has moved closer to the United States and its allies in seeking a counter-weight to China’s growing military shadow in the Asia-Pacific region.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping exchange gifts in Mahabalipuram on the outskirts of Chennai, India.

It has been infuriated by China’s diplomatic backing for Pakistan, which controls a large chunk of Muslim-majority Kashmir. The Himalayan region has been a long-standing source of conflict between India and Pakistan.

But at talks on Friday, the leaders acknowledged the common fight

against “terrorism”, Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said.

Modi and Xi said “that radicalisation was a matter of concern to both, and that both would work together to see that radicalisation and terrorism did not affect the fabric of our multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies”,

Gokhale told reporters.

China made no immediate comment on the summit. But the official Xinhua news agency said Xi received a “warm welcome” from Modi and they agreed their countries “should respect and learn from each other so as to jointly achieve common development and prosperity.”

BRIEFING

At least four dead in New York shooting: Police

**NEW YORK:** At least four people died and three were wounded in a shooting at a social club in New York early Saturday, police said. No one has been arrested over the shooting, which took place in Brooklyn, and the motive and exact circumstances are not known, a New York police official told AFP. The local affiliate of ABC News described the place where the shooting took place as an after-hours club. Four men were pronounced dead at the scene, while two other men and a woman suffered non life threatening injuries, police said.

Iran vows response to attack on tanker off Saudi coast

**TEHRAN:** Iran vowed on Saturday not to let an attack on one of its oil tankers off the coast of Saudi Arabia to go unanswered, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported. Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said clues had been uncovered as to who was behind what he called a “missile attack” on the Sabiti tanker.

Six out of 10 European women suffer sexism at work: Survey

**PARIS:** Sixty percent of women in Europe have suffered gender-based or sexual violence at work, according to a study across five countries published on Saturday. French research group Ifop found 21 percent reported such attacks in the last 12 months and over 40 percent of those were under the age of 30. More than 10 percent of the 5,000 respondents—nine percent in France, 15 percent in Spain—said they had “forced of unwanted” sex from someone in their workplace. The study authors said that figure “highlights the grey area that may exist around consent” when it can “be extorted in a context of subordination, intimidation or manipulation”.

Seven stranded whales found dead in Indonesia

**KUPANG (Indonesia):** Seven pilot whales were found dead on an eastern Indonesian beach, an official said Saturday, after 17 were stranded in the remote area. Residents of nearby Menia Village managed to save ten of the whales, all roughly three to four metres long, in a rescue attempt on Friday. “There were some lacerations on their body from the contacts with rocks,” local marine conservation agency head Ikram Sangaji told AFP. He added that the injuries on the whales indicated they were not handled properly during the rescue.

(AGENCIES)

Thai opposition accuses army chief of meddling in politics, instigating hatred

REUTERS  
BANGKOK, OCT 12

A Thai opposition party accused Thailand’s army chief on Saturday of meddling in politics and instigating hatred, hitting back at his attack on opposition politicians and academics a day earlier.

Direct military rule officially ended in Thailand in July, although the new civilian administration is led by the former army chief who overthrew the previous elected government in 2014.

The current army chief, General Apirat Kongsompong, has repeatedly said the military has stepped back from politics, but on Friday he strongly criticised opposition politicians and academics.

He accused them of colluding to brainwash and mobilise young people and of having “communist” ideas to overthrow the monarchy.

He did not identify the people but two silhouetted pictures he showed during his emotional speech were easily recognizable as Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, charismatic leader of the Future Forward Party popular among Thai youth.

Responding to the attack, the party’s secretary-general Piyabutr Saengkanokkul said the army chief was meddling in politics and painting those with more progressive views as enemies of the state to instigate hatred.

“The speech reinforced conflicts and divide. As we’ve seen during the Cold War, people labeled as commu-

Army chief claims opposition politicians colluded to brainwash young people.

nists became enemies of the state, marked for elimination by any means,” Piyabutr said, referring to a university massacre in 1976.

“You’re trying to evoke another Cold War in this country when there isn’t one,” said Piyabutr, a former law academic.

On Oct 6, 1976, state forces and royalist mobs attacked a group of about 2,000 students inside Thammasat University and killed dozens, accusing them of sympathizing with left-leaning revolutions sweeping through the region at the time.

Thailand’s monarchy is legally above reproach. Future Forward Party has denied accusations that it is anti-monarchy, saying the institution is untouchable.

Piyabutr said Apirat’s rhetoric was an attempt to create a crisis in order to justify the military’s exercising special powers and interfering in politics.

“There needs to always be a crisis for the military to always remain powerful ... That crisis needs to be created and instigated,” said Piyabutr.

Turkish-backed Syrian rebels seize centre of Syrian border town: Ankara

US warns of devastating sanctions; Erdogan says he won’t stop ‘no matter what anyone says’.

REUTERS  
ISTANBUL/BEIRUT, OCT 12

Turkish-backed Syrian rebels seized control of the centre of the Syrian border town of Ras al Ain town on Saturday, a senior Turkish security official said, as Turkey’s offensive against a Kurdish militia in the region entered its fourth day.

“The (Syrian rebel) national army took control of the town centre this morning. Inspections are being conducted in residential areas,” the official told Reuters.

Turkish forces had overnight?? stepped up their bombardment of Ras al Ain in their incursion, after US troops in the region came under artillery fire from Turkish positions.

The United States has ramped up its efforts to persuade Ankara to halt the offensive against the US-backed Kurdish YPG forces, saying Ankara was causing “great harm” to ties and could face sanctions.

Turkey launched its incursion after US President Donald Trump spoke by phone on Sunday with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and withdrew US troops who had been fighting alongside Kurdish forces.

There has been fierce international criticism of the assault and concern about its humanitarian consequences. The Syrian Kurdish-led administration said nearly 200,000 people have been displaced as a result of the offensive. Erdogan dismissed the mounting criticism of the operation and said on Friday evening that Turkey “will not



A woman with a flag of Kurdistan painted on her face attends a demonstration against Turkey’s military action in northeastern Syria, in Strasbourg, France, on Saturday.

stop it, no matter what anyone says”.

Thick plumes of smoke rose around Ras al Ain, one of two Syrian border towns targeted in the offensive, on Saturday as Turkish artillery pounded the area, said a Reuters reporter across the frontier in the Turkish town of Ceylanpinar.

Intense gunfire also resounded from within Ras al Ain while warplanes could be heard flying overhead.

It was quieter at Tel Abyad, the operation’s other main target some 120 km (75 miles) to the west, with only occasional shelling heard in the area,

India eases mobile phone shutdown in Kashmir

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SRINAGAR (INDIA), OCT 12

The Indian government said Saturday that most mobile phone connections in Kashmir will be restored, easing a security clampdown imposed more than two months ago when the troubled region’s autonomy was cancelled.

The decision was taken after a security review in the restive Himalayan region, government spokesman Rohit Kansal told a press conference.

All phones linked to a monthly subscription “will stand restored and be functional from noon on Monday,” he said, adding that the measure would apply to all districts of Kashmir.

Delhi, however, gave no indication on whether internet services would also be restored.

The New Delhi government ended Kashmir’s autonomy on August 5 and imposed the mobile phone and internet blackout as part of a huge security clampdown.

Tens of thousands of extra troops were also sent in an operation that critics said virtually cut off Muslim-majority Kashmir, which has been gripped by an insurgency for the past three decades, from the outside world.

Kansal gave no indication on whether internet services would also be restored. The government, however, on Thursday lifted restrictions on tourists travelling to the region and released three politicians among hundreds of people detained after August 5.

Kansal said all those detained would be released gradually after review.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. The two countries have fought two wars over the territory and cross-border clashes regularly erupt. India maintains that most people in its part of the disputed region support the move to take away the special status.

Top candidate’s running mate in Afghan poll alleges ‘systematic fraud’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL, OCT 12

Afghanistan’s election commission is orchestrating “systematic fraud” following presidential polls last month, a top candidate’s running mate alleged Saturday, an accusation likely to inflame political tensions following the key vote.

The claims by Asadullah Saadati, who is running beside Afghanistan’s Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, come as the country is in the midst of an uneasy waiting period after the September 28 election.

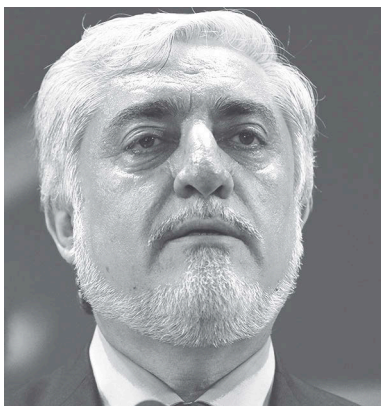
Election officials have called on candidates to show restraint and wait for the announcement of preliminary

results in a bid to avoid a repeat of the disastrous election of 2014 which was marred by duelling claims of victory and fraud by Abdullah and his top rival Ashraf Ghani, who went on to win the presidency.

“Circles within the election commission and the palace are jointly organising systematic fraud,” Saadati told a news conference, without citing any evidence.

“The result sheets that are being counted are fraudulent and their entries must stop.”

Voting this year is supposed to be more secure than ever, with each voter verified through biometric machines to ensure no one can cast multiple ballots.



Abdullah Abdullah

Saadati claimed the Independent Election Commission (IEC) was counting “fraudulent” and non-biometric votes.

The IEC has repeatedly said it would only count ballots verified biometrically.

Highlighting the challenges it faces, the commission on Saturday said unidentified hackers had unsuccessfully attempted to break into its computer servers.

On September 30, just two days after the election and before all votes had even arrived in Kabul for counting, Abdullah claimed victory in a move that international and local observers panned as premature.

Preliminary results are not due

until October 19 but officials have already said that date will likely be pushed back by a few days.

The IEC has said about 2.7 million of Afghanistan’s 9.6 million registered voters cast a ballot—a record low turnout amid fears of fraud, and threats of deadly Taliban violence. However not all of those votes have been verified.

After a recent visit to the IEC, Canada’s ambassador to Afghanistan Dave Metcalfe said he was “impressed” by the commission’s attempts to fight voter fraud.

“The checks and balances implemented by the IEC represent a new standard for Afghan elections,” he said in a statement.















BRIEFING

Fury to make pro wrestling debut in Saudi Arabia

**LAS VEGAS:** A pair of pugilistic big men will clash in a cross over of combat sports as former boxing champion Tyson Fury fights Braun Strowman in Saudi Arabia later this month. Fury will make the brief switch to professional wrestling when he fights on a World Wrestling Entertainment Inc card in Saudi Arabia on October 31. “How honoured I am to be here and be involved in such a massive event in Saudi Arabia. It’s a fantastic opportunity for me,” Fury said at a news conference in Las Vegas, Nevada on Friday. Fury, who is preparing for a rematch with World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Deontay Wilder next year, said performing in the WWE has long been dream of his.

Police detain 31 fans ahead of Czech-England clash

**PRAGUE:** Czech police said Friday they had detained 31 fans following clashes in Prague’s city centre ahead of the Euro 2020 qualifier pitting the Czech Republic against England. Police “took steps against football hooligans at two restaurants in Prague,” police said in a tweet. “Police have detained 31 people in total, including 14 foreigners,” they said, adding they had to use force to restore calm. No injuries were reported. Czech media said the clashes occurred near the historic Old Town Square. The Czech Republic beat England 2-1 in the game.

USA thump Cuba 7-0 in CONCACAF opener

**WASHINGTON:** Weston McKennie scored a hat trick as the United States opened their CONCACAF Nations League campaign in style, thrashing Cuba 7-0 on Friday. Jordan Morris added a goal and contributed on three others. Josh Sargent scored and Christian Pulisic converted a penalty for the Americans, who also benefited from an own goal from a Cuba player. McKennie put the hosts in front less than a minute into the contest off a low cross from Morris. It was a second big defeat in the competition for Cuba, who fell 6-0 to Canada in the previous round. In other matches on Friday, Mexico beat Bermuda 5-1 in Hamilton. Jose Macias scored twice and Uriel Antuna, Hirving Lozano and Hector Herrera scored for Mexico, with Nahki Wells grabbing the lone goal for the hosts. **(AGENCIES)**

Shrestha hoping to strike South Asian gold

Having overcome numerous hassles in his life to start judo, the 20-year-old now aims for a top-podium finish at home.



POST PHOTO: KESHAV THAPA

Judoka Indra Bahadur Shrestha (in white) spars with his teammate during a traning session at the Multipurpose Covered Hall in Nayabazar, Kathmandu .

**SAILENDRA ADHIKARI**  
KATHMANDU, OCT 12

Judoka Indra Shrestha is hard at training for the upcoming South Asian Games to be held in Nepal. The 20-year-old said his training and preparations are going well and he also expects to win a medal for his country. But he believes, lack of practice matches, especially with foreign judokas, are limiting his chances. Shrestha was very young when his father, also the sole breadwinner of the family of six, was jailed. The struggles of his family began. “We had problems making ends meet and studying. I don’t remember my age but I was very young. I didn’t know what to do,” said Shrestha. Shrestha took shelter at the Prisoners Assistance Mission, an organisation that takes care of prisoners and their children. One day, the chairperson of the mission asked judo

coach Surya Narayan Shrestha if the children could train for the game. Shrestha was chosen to train. “I am not so sure but I think I was 9 or 10 when I started playing the game,” he remembers. As training started, Shrestha, slowly, fell in love with the game. “I know football and cricket are more popular in the country and a lot of people follow them. But I had trained for judo. So taking up other sports didn’t come to my mind as I grew up,” he said. A decade after starting the game, Shrestha’s sole focus now is to win a medal for Nepal in the 13th South Asian Games slated for December 1-10. Shrestha won the gold medal in his weight category in the seventh and eighth National Games. He also won gold in the South Asian Judo Championship in 2018. He said his training is going well, but is concerned by the lack of practice matches. “We mostly play against fellow

players. We train together and know their strengths and weaknesses. So there is not much new to learn in those matches,” he said. He says training and playing matches against better foreign players would increase players’ chances of winning medals. Shrestha’s coach Prithvi Alok agrees the player requires better exposure to hone his skills. “Shrestha is a good hard-working player. He has good technique, but he has to get more practice matches to increase his chances of winning a medal,” said Alok. Alok said they hope to win at least four gold medals in the upcoming regional tournament. But their preparations are hampered by lack of proper equipment. “We have written to the National Sports Council to make available the most essential equipment. Hopefully, they will provide us in time to boost our training,” Alok said. Shrestha and Alok share a common voice when it comes to the dearth of

tournaments in Nepal. “There are not too many tournaments. There should be more events for players to develop their game,” said Shrestha. “We are giving our best in training. But a player will not be able to implement those if he cannot take part in real match situations,” he said. Alok believes judo is gradually making its mark in the country. To help players get acquainted with new techniques, Nepal Judo Association is preparing to send judokas for training in Japan and Mongolia, informed the coach. “The date for abroad training is not finalised yet but hopefully it will be immediately after Dashain festival,” said Alok. As for Shrestha, he strongly believes better sparring partners, especially the foreign athletes, would boost his chances of a medal in the regional meet. “I want to win a gold medal for my country. If I succeed in winning the gold, it will also justify my decision to adopt judo as sports.

Medvedev sets up Zverev clash in Shanghai

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
SHANGHAI, OCT 12

Daniil Medvedev reached a staggering sixth final in a row as he defeated fellow rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas at the Shanghai Masters on Saturday. The US Open finalist from Russia plays Alexander Zverev of Germany in Sunday’s decider as the next generation takes centre stage in China. Zverev overcame Matteo Berrettini of Italy 6-3, 6-4 in the first semi-final. The 23-year-old Medvedev, who has lifted three titles in a breakthrough 2019, beat Greece’s Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/5), 7-5. Medvedev has now seen off the 21-year-old -- who defeated world number one Novak Djokovic on Friday -- in all five of their matches. “It’s something I could never have dreamed of,” the world number four said of his sixth final on the trot. “I want to keep momentum going and



AFP/RS

Daniil Medvedev of Russia celebrates his victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece in their men's singles semi-final match of Shanghai Masters on Saturday.

hopefully make it to seven or eight.” The history was with Medvedev but there was nothing in it as he and

Tsitsipas entered the first-set tie break after 43 minutes of high-quality tennis.

Malnati leads in Houston Open

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
LOS ANGELES, OCT 12

Peter Malnati was five-under through his first five holes and stayed strong through a weather delay and tough, windy conditions on Friday to hold the clubhouse lead when darkness halted play at the US PGA Tour Houston Open. Malnati, who admitted that he’s been distracted with his wife, Alicia, expecting their first child this month, buckled down to post a seven-under par 65 that gave him a 36-hole total of 10-under 134. Overnight co-leader Talor Gooch was nine-under through 14 holes when play was halted, while Austrian Sepp Straka was Malnati’s closest pursuer in the clubhouse after a one-under 71 for 136. Malnati made a blistering start at Golf Club of Houston with birdies at the first and second followed by an

eagle at the fourth, where he made a 22-foot putt from the fringe. He rolled in a 25-foot birdie putt at the fifth before a two-hour weather delay. When he returned, Malnati added birdies at nine and 15 — where he drained a 24-footer — to top the leaderboard at 10-under. His seven-under effort came as the average score among the morning starters was almost 73 strokes. Malnati is in search of a second tour title to go with his 2015 victory at the Sanderson Farms Championship. Plenty of players were within striking distance on the course. Nick Watney and Lanto Griffin were both eight-under on the back nine. Mexico’s Carlos Ortiz was in the clubhouse on seven-under 137 after a 67, tied with Mark Hubbard who posted a 69. Austin Cook, who shared the first-round lead, was two-over through 15 holes but still just four shots off the pace.

History maker Kipchoge busts mythical two-hour marathon barrier in Vienna

The 34-year-old Kenyan holds the men’s world record for the 42.195-kilometre race with a time of 2hr 01min 39sec set during Berlin marathon in September last year.

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
VIENNA, OCT 12

Kenya’s Eliud Kipchoge on Saturday made history, busting the mythical two-hour barrier for the marathon on a specially prepared course in a huge Vienna park. With a time of 1hr 59min 40.2sec, the Olympic champion became the first ever to run a marathon in under two hours in the Prater park with the course readied to make it as even as possible. The 34-year-old already holds the men’s world record for the distance with a time of 2hr 01min 39sec, which he set in the flat Berlin marathon on September 16, 2018. But accompanied by a posse of 41 pacemakers and a car in front of them setting the pace, Kipchoge bested that mark, making good on a failed attempt two years ago in Monza, Italy. “I have tried and I am the happiest man to run under two hours in order to inspire many people, to tell people that no human is limited,” Kipchoge said. “I am expecting more athletes all over the world to run under two hours after today.” He described approaching the finish line as “the best moment of my life”. Maintaining a very regular pace at around 2:50 minutes per kilometre, he passed the finish line gesturing and smiling. The founder of the main

sponsors, Ineos, British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, took a personal interest in the challenge and himself competes in Ironman triathlons. “That last kilometre where he actually accelerated was super human,” Ratcliffe said. Kipchoge had been 11 seconds in advance at mid-race as fans lining the course, many waving Kenyan flags, loudly cheered him on. Kipchoge’s coach, Patrick Sang, said the Kenyan had “inspired all of us that we can stretch our limits in our lives”. “Records are meant to be broken, so down the line someone will try again, but history has been made. It’s unbelievable,” Sang added. Kipchoge told reporters earlier this week that his attempt in the Austrian capital was about “making history in this world, like the first man to go to the moon”. Because of the way the run was set up and paced the International Association of Athletics Federations will not validate the time as a world record. The running surface had been partly retarred and readied with other features such as a banked corner that could save time and avoid injury. Pacemakers took turns to support him throughout the 42.195-kilometre race. They included 1,500-metre Olympic champion Matthew Centrowitz and former world champion Bernard Lagat.



REUTERS

Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge crosses the finishing line during his attempt to run a marathon in under two hours in Vienna, Austria, on Saturday.

The course included a 4.3 kilometre-long straight alley, which the Kenyan ran up and down several times amid dry but foggy weather.

Throngs of fans cheered on Kipchoge whenever he passed by. William Magachi, 33, from Nairobi, was one of many Kenyans watching. “It’s amaz-

ing. He is a super human being, the positivity, what he has been able to achieve. It’s a record breaking moment. It never happened and may

Ireland enter last eight in Rugby World Cup

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
FUKUOKA, OCT 12

World Player of the Year Johnny Sexton scored two tries as 14-man Ireland secured a 47-5 bonus-point win over Samoa to reach the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals on Saturday. Ireland had Bundee Aki sent off for a high tackle in the first half but they were still too much for Samoa as they qualified from a tight Pool A despite their shock loss to Japan. With Ireland safely through to the play-offs it leaves Japan and Scotland in a straight shoot-out on Sunday for the remaining Pool A slot. If the game is cancelled because of Typhoon Hagibis, which slammed into Japan on Saturday, the host team will qualify ahead of Scotland. Whoever tops the pool will play South Africa in the quarter-finals while the runner-up will face defending champions New Zealand, whose final match against Italy was cancelled because of the typhoon.

Japan and Scotland will vie for the remaining Pool ‘A’ slot on Sunday.

Ireland were down to 14 men in the 28th minute when Aki, who is of Samoan descent, was sent off for a shoulder to the head of Samoan fly-half Uluapano Seuteni. Ireland coach Joe Schmidt said the dismissal was “devastating” for Aki, who faces missing the rest of the tournament. “It’s hard to argue (about the red card) at the moment but it’s pretty devastating for Bundee,” said Schmidt. “He knows a lot of the Samoan players really well, I know they’ve got a lot of respect for him and for us it’s a really disappointing finish to the night.” Earlier, Samoa hooker Seilala Lam had been yellow-carded for a similar high shot, but he had tried to lower his point of contact while Aki remained upright and referee Nic Berry ruled there was “a high degree of danger”. Ireland were up 21-5, but even with a man down they still managed bonus-point fourth try before half-time when Sexton scored his second. In the second half, amid farcical scenes of ground staff repairing huge divots that opened up in the newly laid turf, Ireland added three more tries and kept Samoa scoreless. Ireland coach Joe Schmidt had complained before the match that the All Blacks would benefit from the extended break caused by the cancellation of their game against Italy. But, there was an advantage too for Ireland who started with a solid win against Scotland then went off the boil against Japan and Russia, and Samoa gave them a chance to get their green machine working smoothly again. As forecast strong winds in Fukuoka from the outer edges of the typhoon did not eventuate, Conor Murray and Sexton were able to work on their kicking game to give Ireland a territorial advantage. From there, Tadhg Furlong and James Ryan led an emerald tide that bullied their way forward. The opening try to Rory Best came from a lineup drive and Furlong scored the second by charging directly into the Samoan defensive wall and emerging on the other side with the try line in front of him. Fullback Jordan Larmour, who was a threat each time he ran with the ball, created the gap which gave Sexton his first try.



# Manushi Yami Bhattarai:

## There’s a lot of hypocrisy in Nepali society

The Samajbadi Party Nepal leader speaks about the MeToo movement that she’s championed, youth leaders in Nepal, and being the daughter of Baburam and Hisila.

PRANAYA SJB RANA

There is a firestorm brewing when I meet with Manushi Yami Bhattarai at Pulchowk’s Mitran da Dhaba. Surrounded by kitschy joke moustaches in a decidedly un-dhaba-like setting, we discuss the unfolding saga of Krishna Bahadur Mahara, who has just been accused of rape by a woman who works for the Parliament Secretariat.

News had just broken the night before about the woman’s allegations of rape and Mahara had yet to step down. The story was developing fast and by the time we’d end our conversation, Mahara would’ve stepped down as Speaker of the House. By the end of the week, there would be a retraction from the woman and then a reaffirmation of her allegations via a formal police complaint. As Dashain holidays began, Mahara would be taken into custody, the first high-profile individual to be investigated for rape allegations as part of the ongoing #MeToo movement that’s taken the world by storm.

Bhattarai has been a vocal proponent of the MeToo movement, expressing support on social media and also working with Tribhuvan University, her alma mater, to build an anti-sexual harassment mechanism, especially in the wake of allegations of sexual misconduct and harassment at the hands of Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan, a senior lecturer at the university.

So naturally, we begin by talking about Mahara and the social media reaction to the allegations against him. I point out that the response I’ve seen has largely been in support of the woman and a fair investigation, with fewer people taking Mahara’s side. This is in stark contrast to the reception that other similar allegations have received, like with Keshav Shapit, Bhattachan or within Kathmandu’s theatre community.

“It has a lot to do with visibility,” says Bhattarai. “Others who were accused had a smaller circle, but people from across the country know Mahara.”

But it is also about the MeToo movement, she elaborates. It’s been over a year that the movement came to Nepal and although not much has changed for the perpetrators, there is growing awareness.

Mahara has since stepped down as Speaker and been taken into custody for investigation. But nothing remotely similar happened with Bhattachan, who still gets invited as an honoured guest to events around the country.

“I had asked politically affiliated student unions to take up the issue but I was shocked that none of the unions or current students or faculty did,” says Bhattarai. “That’s when we ex-students stepped in to bring faculty and students together. The rector had promised to form a special committee to look into sexual harassment complaints. The committee



POST ILLUSTRATION: RABINDRA MANANDHAR

has since been formed and they have a three-month consultation mandate.”

Given that Bhattachan was accused of sexual harassment by two former students, wasn’t it strange that the student unions didn’t take up the matter, I ask.

“The student unions also do seasonal politics,” Bhattarai replies. “If it’s election season then everything becomes a sensitive issue. Some student leaders even told me that the women weren’t even current students so how would raising this issue help them in the election.”

It’s not just student leaders who’ve failed to support the women speaking out about harassment. Notably absent have been Nepal’s leading progressive liberal voices. While these intellectuals, who are writers, poets, columnists and political analysts, never seem to miss an opportunity to pontificate on myriad issues, they’ve largely been missing from the MeToo conversation.

“There’s a lot of double standards and hypocrisy in Nepali society, especially with those who talk about liberal values and portray themselves as progressives,” says Bhattarai. “It’s not just men but women also. They have a list of things they can be progressive about and other uncomfortable things where they would rather not speak. It has a lot to do with social capital and networks, and the networks that form the fastest tend to be that of men.”

How then can we move forward? In the US and in India, the MeToo movement has resulted in legal trials and serious consequences for the men involved. In Nepal, little has happened, and there is a fear that Mahara too will get away with a slap on the wrist.

“That’s the important thing—how to move forward,” says Bhattarai. “We have to build mechanisms and make more people aware of what sexual harassment is and how to minimise it. The onus is not

“The onus is not on a bunch of women who have to get together and decide what needs to be done.”

on a bunch of women who have to get together and decide what needs to be done. Those in power need to take this up and address it on a broader scale.”

But has Bhattarai’s own party built mechanisms to prevent harassment? Yes, she says.

“We had raised this issue multiple times within Naya Shakti, before the merger with Samajbadi Forum. After the merger, we’ve held discussions a few times with the leadership. We’re working on building a separate committee to handle gender issues but the party leaders have insisted to also include caste. We’re trying to institute this issue structurally. Since the committee hasn’t been formed yet, we’ll have to keep reminding the leadership,” she says.

Given Bhattarai’s activism on this issue, I am inclined to believe that she has pursued it structurally within the party. But given also the fact that most political party leaderships still remain the province of men, it is difficult to believe something concrete will come out of it.

Bhattarai is a central committee member and secretary of Province 3 for the Samajbadi Party Nepal, formed after the merger of her father Baburam Bhattarai’s Naya Shakti and Upendra Yadav’s Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum. Naya Shakti itself was formed after Bhattarai split from Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s Maoist party,

the same party that Baburam and Dahal had once led jointly to war.

“We left the communist party because we didn’t believe that they would take up any progressive agendas to the extent that they could,” says Bhattarai. “So we decided to do it on our own. Even after this massive two-thirds majority, we were skeptical but hopeful that they would respect the people’s mandate and bring about some changes. But we’ve only seen a kind of boastful pride in the two-thirds majority.”

Bhattarai’s father Baburam has long been vocal about amendments to the 2015 constitution, which was their condition to joining the government, she says.

“After the merger, we had a meeting with the top leadership of the ruling Nepal Communist Party, where we reminded them of their commitment to constitutional amendments, an end to the transitional justice process and to refrain from indulging in political horse-trading,” she says. “So our support for the government is conditional.”

Bhattarai might be the daughter of two established political leaders but she is fairly young, despite the salt-and-pepper hair she’s inherited from her mother, Hisila Yami. Nepal’s political parties have a tendency to call anyone who is not a dotard a “youth leader”. There are politicians in their 40s and 50s who many insist are youth leaders. So I wonder how Bhattarai, who is in her 30s, feels about this branding about of the word ‘youth’.

“Everyone wants to talk about youth and young people because this is the group that has the economic, cultural, socio-political capital,” she says. “But in politics, it is not just about your age. How different are you from those who are not young? If there’s no difference then what’s the use of calling yourself a youth leader? If you’re speaking the same lan-

guage, using the same words as the previous generation then what’s the point of being a youth leader?”

She has especially choice words for ‘new’ parties that have recently arisen, parties that are mostly urban- and youth-oriented, but lack a clear ideology and vision.

“New parties have come up and new faces are joining politics with an innocence that they will change things,” says Bhattarai. “It’s good to talk about changing the political culture but they’re only talking about good governance and corruption and issue-based activism. That’s like painting the wall when there are huge cracks underneath. There are institutional and structural issues that need to be tackled.”

This is the same criticism that many have levelled at the young parties but the old parties aren’t doing any better either. The Nepali Congress, the grand old party of Nepali politics, is in the doldrums after losing miserably to the Communists in the last election. The ruling Nepal Communist Party, on the other hand, appears obsessed with its unprecedented two-thirds majority.

Towards the end of our conversation, I ask Bhattarai the one question she has been expecting this entire time. It is a question that every journalist who interviews her asks and it is one that I cannot afford not to ask, even though I chose to interview Bhattarai on her own terms, and not as the daughter of Baburam and Hisila. Bhattarai was just 11 years old when the ‘people’s war’ started and she was dispatched to India to go to school on her own. She lived 10 years as Astha, a girl from Nepal, constantly moving schools and eventually ending up at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Baburam’s alma mater and a hotbed for leftists in India.

It can’t be easy to be the daughter of Baburam and Hisila, both of whom are relentlessly criticised, no matter what they say. So how exactly does it feel to be their daughter?

“I feel proud,” says Bhattarai. “I’ve gotten a lot of exposure because I am their daughter—exposure to politics, society, and what this world is about. Whatever I learned, I learned because of their belief that I should. But during the 9-10 years that I was underground, I learned that I could do something on my own without their help or support. Much of who I am today is due to my parents, but it is not just because of them.”

MITRAAN DA DHABA, PULCHOWK

ON THE MENU	
HARABHARA KEBAB	RS 390
CHICKEN BIRYANI	RS 700
BUTTER PANEER	RS 600
BLACK TEA	RS 60

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

The road to the truth is difficult.  
A path filled with division, diversion and danger.  
A path filled with validation and temptation.  
There are voices to be heard and stories to be told.  
The road is long and the road is hard.  
But this is the road we walk.  
Without fear or favour.

THE KATHMANDU POST